

Sign Code Variation

Metropolis Performing Arts Centre

The Metropolis Performing Arts Centre at 111 W. Campbell Street will be installing a Marquee on the front of their building. Per Chapter 30, Section 30-201.h.1.c, Marquees are allowed in the downtown, if in conjunction with a theater (with manual change bulletin boards).

We are requesting a sign code variation for two features:

- A variation from Chapter 30, section 30-801.c.3 to allow a marquee with electronic display where only manual change bulletin boards are allowed.
- A variation from Chapter 30, Section 30-120.f to allow off-premises advertising on the electronic displays of theater sponsor names which are not located on the same property.

The first variation will include the following features:

- Marquee lights and electronic displays shall be turned off at all times between the hours of 11:00 pm and 7:00 am. The under lighting will stay lit until all businesses in the building are closed for safety reasons.
- The brightness of the individual light bulbs shall be dimmable and they will not chase or blink.
- The electronic displays shall be static only with no scrolling, fading, flashing, animation, video or audio.
- The message on the electronic display shall be held for a minimum of 10 seconds
- The electronic displays shall be equipped with auto-dimming photocell technology to control the brightness to .3 foot-candles maximum above ambient lighting conditions, certified by the manufacturer.

The second variation shall not include any specific product advertising other than allowed as part of the variation. The only reference to any non-Metropolis entities will be a showing of the entities or individuals who are sponsors of the show or production. The show sponsor will be listed as shown on the 2 attached examples for Dirty Rotten Scoundrels and Elton John. We will not be advertising the businesses per se or the type of product that the business engages in or sells.

Section 30-902 requires the petitioner to provide justification relative to the standard contained in the ordinance.

1. The particular difficulty or peculiar hardship is not self-created by the petitioner. In response, the sign code of the Village of Arlington Heights is very restrictive but conducive to development. However, the code, when adopted did not envision the type of sign that Metropolis is envisioning constructing. The variation for an electronic display comports with the more modern and more technologically advanced types of signs that have been developed in the last several years. It is reasonably similar to the electronic display of the sign constructed by the Village on the corner of Northwest Hwy. and Arlington Heights Road.
2. The granting of the variation shall not create a traffic hazard, a depreciation of nearby property values or otherwise be detrimental to the public health, safety, morals and welfare. This variation will only enhance properties, property values and the surrounding

area. It is designed with the immediate residential, commercial and entertainment establishments on Campbell Street and the surrounding areas in mind. There is no perceived traffic hazard created by the sign as described above.

3. The variation will serve to relieve the applicant from a difficulty attributable to the location, topography, circumstances on nearby properties or other peculiar hardship; and not merely served to provide the applicant with the competitive advantages over similar businesses. There are no similar businesses in the surrounding area. Performing Arts at Metropolis has experienced a resurgence and growth in revenue, ticket sales and activities in the theater including the School of the Performing Arts. The difficulty that we are seeking to alleviate is as described above and is seeking only to identify the location of the theater and the production or show that is currently running at the theater. In numerous instances, patrons, visitors and others have extreme difficulty in locating the theater due to its mid-block entrance. There have been anecdotal instances where visitors and patrons have been standing in front of the theater entrance and asking where the theater was located. The marquee will become a focal point for our patrons, visitors to downtown Arlington Heights and our residents.
4. The variation will not alter the essential character of the locality. The locality is composed of mixed-use buildings including residential condominium units, restaurants, parks, and other entertainment venues in the immediate area. It will be consistent with the surrounding character of the neighborhood and will again provide a focal point for the downtown entertainment and restaurant District.
5. The applicant's business cannot reasonably function under the standards of this chapter. In virtually every instance of a performing arts center in Chicagoland a marquee is a prominent feature. We believe that the marquee that we have designed in conjunction with the sign company, will be a significant enhancement to our patron's theater experience.

We believe that with these variances, the new Marquee will not only enhance the Metropolis Performing Arts Centre, but it will be a centerpiece for the whole downtown area.

We would respectfully request that the Design Commission and Village Board approve the variation as requested.